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AUTHOR Dahlman, Stanley M.; Proett, Polly-Ann
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ABSTRACT

In 1972, when the third campus of Montgomery College was being planned, a commitment was made to community use of the campus facilities. From the day the Germanstown Campus library opened, its services have been available to the college's students and to the community at large. The library has a bookstack capacity of 65,000 books, 100 study carrels in the Media Center, a children's room, an administrative office, and a small study/conference room. Its resources include 50,000 books, records, audio-visual materials, films, video cassettes, and slides recorded in a central college library data system; and the children's room includes a collection of 3,000 books that are made available to the campus day care operation and to the children of the community. Since 1980, there have been over 600 new community requests for library cards each year and the non-campus user groups break down as follows: employed adults (25%), alumni (15%), high school students (15%), homemakers and unemployed (10%), students from other colleges and academic institutions (10%), senior citizens (10%), children (5%), and miscellaneous visitors (5%). Although there were some initial concerns about community use of the libraries at the college, community users have conformed to the guidelines and regulations regarding the use of materials and competition between students and community users for access to books and materials is no longer an issue. (HB)

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# A COLLEGE AND A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

BY

STANLEY M. DAHLMAN

AND

POLLY-ANN PROETT

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MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
GERMANTOWN, MARYLAND

JC 850 292

# A COLLEGE AND A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

By: Stanley M. Dahlman and Polly-Ann Proett

In 1972, when the third campus of Montgomery College was being planned, administrators, faculty and Board members made a commitment to community use of that campus' facilities. The campus was to be located in what was then a rural area in the northern part of the county, twenty-two miles from Washington, D.C. There were few public facilities and no public library in the immediate area. Six years before the campus' library was actually completed, it was a publicly stated goal of the Board of Trustees, the College President, and the Campus Dean, that the library would be available to the residents of the county. That goal has been achieved and indeed exceeded. It was primarily the result of the successful community use of the Germantown Campus library that this service was extended to the two other campuses.

From the day the Germantown Campus library opened, its services have been available to both the College's students and the community. Community library cards were issued to area residents while the campus students were furnished the traditional I.D. card issued to all students at the three campuses. Guidelines for community use took into consideration the importance of safeguarding student access to materials. Initially, there was some discussion of restrictions that might be imposed on community use to ensure that students would have the books and materials required for their course work and for their research. After six years of operation, however, it has not been necessary to place any exceptional restrictions on the community use of the library. The campus library offered day and evening library hours during the week plus Sunday afternoon hours which have been traditional at

Montgomery College in support of the instructional program. When the community users in the Germantown area learned of these services on Sunday, a visit to the Germantown Campus library became a Sunday family affair. In the spring semester of 1981, when classes were offered on Saturdays, the library extended its hours to be open half-day on Saturday during the morning hours for students and faculty use. These additional hours also provided further access for community users.

Many factors contributed to making community use a reality for the 3,700 community library users over the past six years. Community use for the library was the conception of the Campus Dean who moved toward the achievement of this goal by hiring of a director of the library who was supportive of this plan. The determination and efforts of the library director, her staff, campus administration, faculty and students as well as the interest and work of various citizens groups provided the impetus for realization of the original concept.

The Germantown Campus Library, with its seven-day-a-week service when classes are in session, has become established as a rather special place for community users. In addition to its regular service to students and faculty, community users have cited some general reasons why they use the library. These include the quality facility itself, the excellence of its resources, and availability of a unique children's room. The following is a description of each of these areas.

Library Facility - The Germantown Campus Library, located in one wing of the Humanities/Social Sciences Building, is aesthetically pleasing in its design. The large window units that encircle the three exterior walls on the two

floors provide a magnificent view of fields and wooded areas of the campus' 204 acres of grounds, tennis courts, golf driving range and surrounding countryside.

The library is furnished with natural oak furniture with colorful seat covers, two large modular lounge seating units, and other comfortable individual and group seating arrangements. Wall panels are white, sunny yellow and orange. The solar heating/air-conditioning provide dependable comfort year round. The library has a bookstack capacity of 65,000 books; the Media Center has 100 study carrels. A Children's Reading Room, an administrative office, a small study/conference room and staff room, with small kitchen area, are contiguous to the stack areas. The Periodicals area has a separate microfilm section that has its own air-conditioning unit which operates when the main air conditioning units are turned off.

Resources - The campus collection of 50,000 books, records, A.V. materials, films, video cassettes, slides, etc., are recorded in a central college library data system for the three campus units. These books and materials were primarily selected by the teaching faculty and constitute an exemplary collection of publications purchased over the last seven years. The library's automated sytem provides for circulation, overdue notices and information on status of availability of books for intra-campus loans. This system also affords access to 150,000 volumes housed at the two other campuses. The Germantown collection is well suited to the campus curriculum emphasis on business, management, and computer science in addition to materials in the sciences, physical education, liberal arts and social sciences. Books and materials related to high technology are of special interest to the government and business professionals employed in the 270 interstate corridor and for the

residents of the fast growing, affluent suburban Germantown area as well.

Children's Room - The collection of 3,000 children's books, including a large gift collection of children's paperback books, are available to the campus day care operation, for student use and for use by the children of the community.

Clear guidelines were established for community users when the campus library opened in 1978. Brochures, library guides and other orientation handouts have been developed for students and community users, including children and high school students. Guided tours are given to groups visiting the library. The positive, helpful assistance provided for students, faculty and community users helps to encourage use of the library collection.

The following statistics provide information on the accumulative number of community users who have requested library cards. After 1980, there have been over 600 new community requests for library cards each year.

Statistics on Community Use - 1978 - 1984

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1978 - 1979 | - | 200 |
| 1979 - 1980 | - | 700 |
| 1980 - 1981 | - | 1,400 |
| 1981 - 1982 | - | 2,400 |
| 1982 - 1983 | - | 3,000 |
| 1983 - 1984 | - | 3,700 |

The Gaithersburg Public Library was destroyed by fire in 1981, and, although it was located some distance from the Germantown Campus area, there was an

immediate increase in library card applications. The majority of the requests were from elementary and junior high school students. Since the Germantown Campus library had borrowing privileges for both school and community use, it was the logical place for the younger student to turn to in an emergency.

Statistics below indicate the percentage of usage by the various groups of users.

Non-Campus User Groups With Percentage of Distribution

| | |
|---|---|
| Adult Employed | 25% |
| Alumni | 15% |
| High School Student | 15% |
| Homemaker & Unemployed | 15% |
| College & Other Academic Institutions | 10% |
| Senior Citizens | 10% |
| Children | 5% |
| Miscellaneous & Visitors | 5% |

Business, government and other employed persons constitute the largest group of library community users. This group includes professionals, executive, and clerical employees, most of whom work in the Germantown area. Many of the community users have commented on the campus library. A few examples are as follows:

1. John Molesworth, FBI agent, finds the quiet study room to his liking, -- a fine place to work.

2. Mr. Ronald Simmons, IBM engineer, comes to the library to use technical books and materials where he says he has found the most current materials housed in any one place. He thinks it is better to use resources at this library rather than ask his company to purchase these materials.

3. Certified Public Accountant candidates usually descend in large number in the spring to study for the examinations. Felix Aiken and Joseph McAlarnen use materials and find the atmosphere and quiet study places very important during the many days and hours needed for preparation to take exams.

4. Dan Johnson, a Sears management employee, first came to the library as a community user interested in checking out some investment reference materials. By talking with the librarian he learned of the video taped class lectures in economics, met the instructor and enrolled in classes. He has continued to take classes and use the library. This outreach pattern is repeated many times over with other groups of library users.

5. A doctoral candidate at the University of California at Berkeley, who frequently comes to this area to visit parents, sums up points that patrons from all user categories make: "The employees are very helpful and responsive to the community users need to have special help in learning about the library organization and resources. It is easy to see that community users are very special and treated with the same regard as other users. The books are beautifully displayed in wonderful surroundings that affords great comfort and quiet study.

Subject area coverage in collections used are current and more than adequate for the size of the library. There are no fines, which makes for freer use, more responsibility and, ultimately, more caring about use of books and materials. This is the place to get work done."

High school students find it extends their own library resources. The campus library is the next step beyond the high school resources; it expands and enhances their research capability. Children take special delight in using the Children's Room whether they come in groups with their day care leader or with parents. They can use the books or relax on the "whistle mats" and listen to records. Senior citizens find their own reasons for enjoying the use of the library. The periodical and newspaper section is usually their favorite area; the record collection and A.V. section, however, are also high on their list of priorities.

Historically, there was some opposition at the College to the idea of allowing the public the use of the libraries at Montgomery College. When the Germantown Campus opened, there was much interest in what was thought by some to be merely an experiment. In general, community users have conformed to the guidelines and regulations concerning the use of materials and have not created any significant problems. The inherent risk of students competing with community users for access to books and materials is no longer an issue. Offering community users library privileges in a county area that did not have a public library conveniently located, was a very practical idea. Opening the library to the community has proven to be beneficial to the campus as an effective outreach activity and to the community as a viable public service.

Submitted by:
Dr. Stanley Dahlman
Dr. Polly-Ann Proett
Montgomery College
20200 Observation Drive
Germantown, MD 20874



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